

Qualitative Case Review

Northern Region

Fiscal Year 2004

Preliminary Results

Office of Services Review

May 2004

Executive Summary

- 24 cases were reviewed for the Northern Region Qualitative Case Review conducted in May 2004.
- **For the second year in a row, the overall Child Status score was 100%, with all cases reaching an acceptable level. This exceeds the exit requirement of 85%.**
- Safety, Health/Physical Well-being, and Caregiver Functioning also reached 100%. There were solid increases in three Child Status indicators: Prospects for Permanence increased from 41.7% to 66.7%, Family Resourcefulness increased from 43.8% to 56.3% and Satisfaction increased from 75% to 91.7%. The other Child Status indicators remained at or near last year's levels.
- **The overall score for System Performance increased from 58.3% to 79.2%. This does not meet the exit requirement of 85%, but it a substantial improvement from last year.**
- A majority of the System Performance indicators improved since last year. Those that improved did so substantially, while those that declined did so only slightly. Child and Family Participation increased from 50% to 87.5%, Child and Family Team Coordination increased from 41.7% to 66.7%, and Long Term View more than doubled from 25% to 58.3%! There were also double-digit increases in Child and Family Planning Process (45.8% to 62.5%) and Successful Transitions (from 62.5% to 72.7%).
- There was a minor difference in the results when comparing foster care cases with home-based cases.
- As with last year, half or more of the workers had large caseloads (17 or more cases). There also appeared to be more turnover, since there were no workers last year with less than a year's experience, whereas this year there were four new workers.
- The analysis of individual indicator scores shows overall improvement in both the Child Status and System Performance indicators.

Methodology

The Qualitative Case Review was held the week of May 3-7, 2004. Twenty-four open DCFS cases in the Northern Region were selected and scored. The cases were reviewed by certified reviewers from the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG), the Office of Services Review (OSR), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), as well as first time reviewers from DCFS and outside stakeholders. The cases were selected by CWPPG based on a sampling matrix assuring that a representative group of children were reviewed. The sample included children in out-of-home care and families receiving home-based services, such as voluntary and protective supervision and intensive family preservation. Cases were selected to include offices throughout the region.

The information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (when placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. In addition the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Performance Tables

Preliminary data

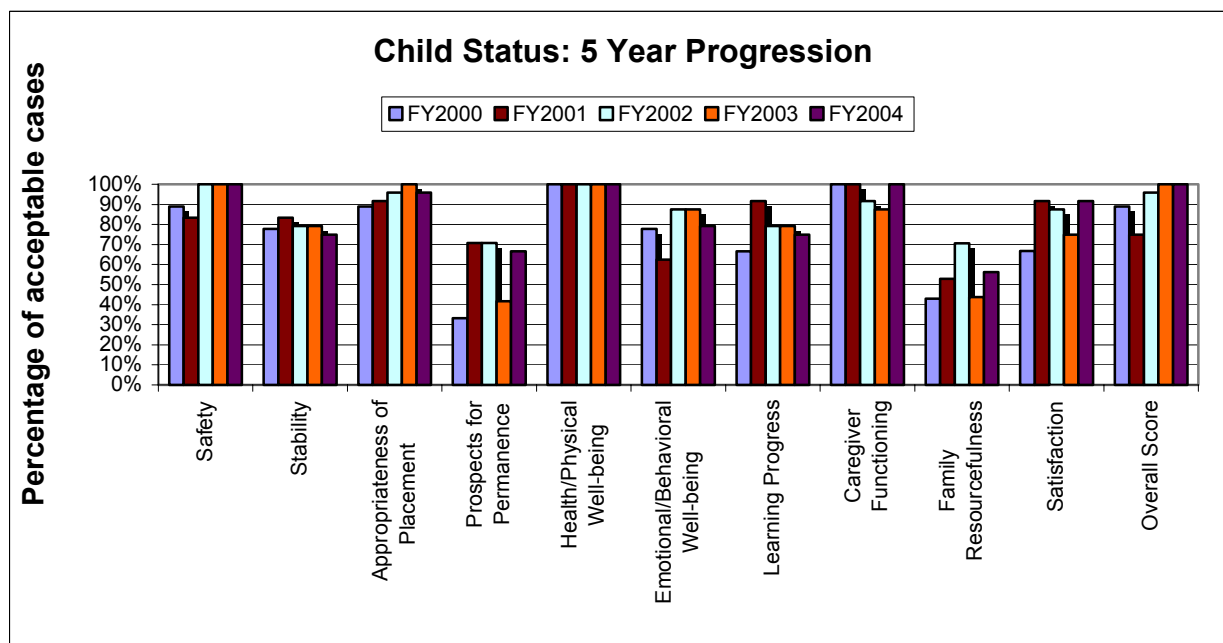
The results in the following tables are based on the scores provided to OSR by reviewers. They contain the scores of 24 cases. These results are preliminary only and are subject to change.

Northern Child Status									
		# of cases			FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
	# of cases	Needing			Baseline				Current
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria 85% on overall score		Scores				Scores
Safety	24	0	100.0%		88.9%	83.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Stability	18	6	75.0%		77.8%	83.3%	79.2%	79.2%	75.0%
Appropriateness of Placement	23	1	95.8%		88.9%	91.7%	95.8%	100.0%	95.8%
Prospects for Permanence	16	8	66.7%		33.3%	70.8%	70.8%	41.7%	66.7%
Health/Physical Well-being	24	0	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Emotional/Behavioral Well-being	19	5	79.2%		77.8%	62.5%	87.5%	87.5%	79.2%
Learning Progress	18	6	75.0%		66.7%	91.7%	79.2%	79.2%	75.0%
Caregiver Functioning	12	0	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	91.7%	87.5%	100.0%
Family Resourcefulness	9	7	56.3%		42.9%	52.9%	70.6%	43.8%	56.3%
Satisfaction	22	2	91.7%		66.7%	91.7%	87.5%	75.0%	91.7%
Overall Score	24	0	100.0%		88.9%	75.0%	95.8%	100.0%	100.0%

1)

- 1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable Child Status score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.

Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change



Statistical Analysis of Child Status Results:

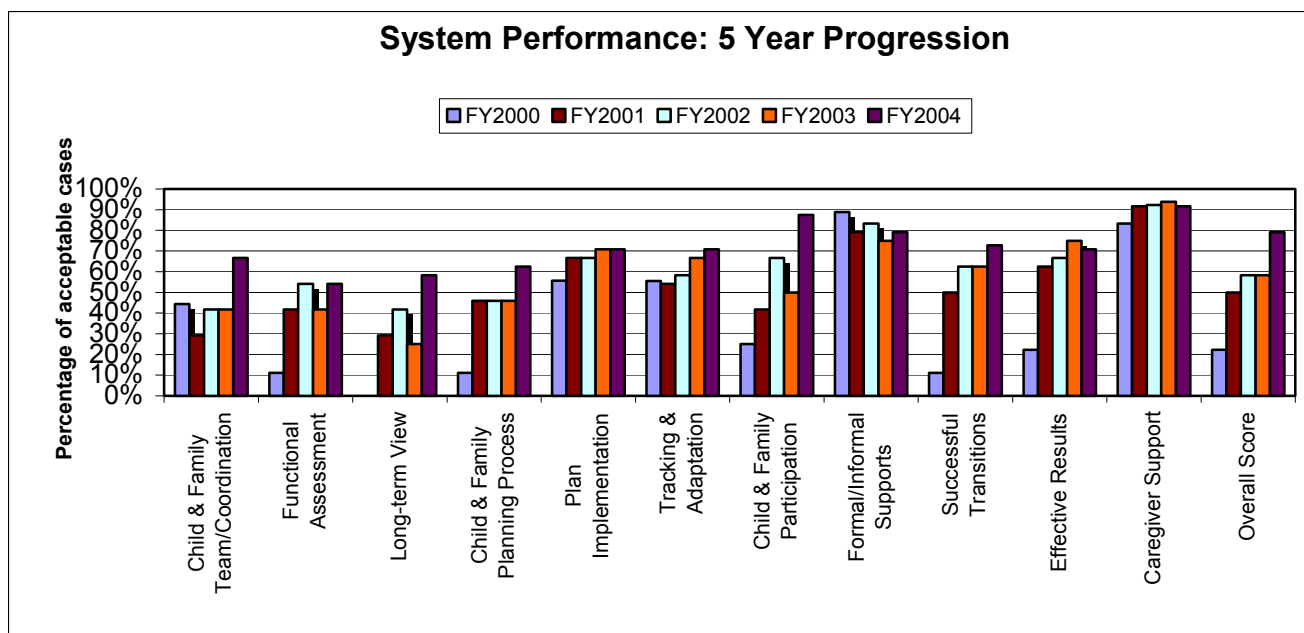
For the second year in a row the overall Child Status score was 100%, with all cases reaching an acceptable level. This exceeds the exit requirement of 85%. Northern Region has maintained exceptionally high scores on Child Status for the past three years.

Safety also was acceptable on all cases (100%) for the third year in a row; no safety concerns were reported on any of the cases reviewed. Health/Physical Well-being and Caregiver Functioning also scored 100%.

The greatest improvement on a Child Status indicator was the increase in Prospects for Permanence from 41.7% to 66.7%. Significant increases were also seen in Family Resourcefulness (43.8% to 56.3%) and in Satisfaction (75% to 91.7%). Appropriateness of Placement, Stability, and Learning Progress each decreased by 4.2 percentage points, meaning there was one less case that scored acceptable this year than last year.

Northern System Performance											
		# of cases				FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	
	# of cases	Needing	Exit Criteria 70% on Shaded indicators		Baseline					Current	
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria 85% on overall score		Scores					Scores	
Child & Family Team/Coordination	16	8	66.7%		44.4%	29.2%	41.7%	41.7%	41.7%	66.7%	
Functional Assessment	13	11	54.2%		11.1%	41.7%	54.2%	41.7%	41.7%	54.2%	
Long-term View	14	10	58.3%		0.0%	29.2%	41.7%	25.0%	25.0%	58.3%	
Child & Family Planning Process	15	9	62.5%		11.1%	45.8%	45.8%	45.8%	45.8%	62.5%	
Plan Implementation	17	7	70.8%		55.6%	66.7%	66.7%	70.8%	70.8%	70.8%	
Tracking & Adaptation	17	7	70.8%		55.6%	54.2%	58.3%	66.7%	70.8%	70.8%	
Child & Family Participation	21	3	87.5%		25.0%	41.7%	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	87.5%	
Formal/Informal Supports	19	5	79.2%		88.9%	79.2%	83.3%	75.0%	75.0%	79.2%	
Successful Transitions	16	6	72.7%		11.1%	50.0%	62.5%	62.5%	62.5%	72.7%	
Effective Results	17	7	70.8%		22.2%	62.5%	66.7%	75.0%	75.0%	70.8%	
Caregiver Support	11	1	91.7%		83.3%	91.7%	92.3%	93.8%	93.8%	91.7%	
Overall Score	19	5	79.2%		22.2%	50.0%	58.3%	58.3%	58.3%	79.2%	1)
				0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%							

- 1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable System Performance score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.



Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change

Statistical Analysis of System Performance Results:

After being at 58.3% for the past two years, the overall score for System Performance jumped to 79.2%!

There were large increases in some of the System Performance indicators. Child and Family Participation increased from 50% to 87.5%, Child and Family Team Coordination increased from 41.7% to 66.7%, and Long Term View more than doubled from 25% to 58.3%! There were also double-digit increases in Child and Family Planning Process (45.8% to 62.5%), Functional Assessment (from 41.7% to 54.2%) and Successful Transitions (from 62.5% to 72.7%). Formal/ Informal Supports rose from 75% to 79.2%. Tracking and Adaptation rose from 66.7% to 70.8% while Plan Implementation remained unchanged at this same level (70.8%).

Two core indicators exceeded the exit criteria of 70%. These were Plan Implementation and Tracking and Adaptation, both at 70.8%.

Additional Analysis:

The analysis of individual indicator scores shows overall improvement in both Child Status and System Performance indicators.

- Last year the total number of System Performance indicators that scored a 1 dropped from 15 to 8. This year that number dropped even lower; there was only one indicator that scored a 1.
- The total number of Child Status indicators that scored acceptably nudged up from 182 to 185.
- The total number of System Performance indicators that scored acceptably jumped from 148 last year to 176 this year.
- The number of System Performance indicators that scored a 4 rose from last year (up to 100 from 97), and there was a significant increase in the number of 5's (from 48 to 69) and in the number of 6's (from 3 to 7).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

RESULTS BY CASE TYPE AND PERMANENCY GOALS

There was a minor difference in the results when comparing foster care cases with home-based cases. Nine of the 11 foster care cases had acceptable overall System Performance (81.8%) while 10 of the 13 home-based cases were acceptable (76.9%).

Of the five cases that were not acceptable on System Performance, three were home-based cases. Two of these cases were PSS cases and the other was a PFP case.

Case Type	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
Foster Care	11	9	81.8%
Home-based	13	10	76.9%

Six of nine cases with a goal of “Remain Home” had acceptable results. Cases where the efforts are directed at keeping children in the home appear to struggle on System Performance when compared to Adoption, Independent Living, and Return Home cases. They perform about the same as cases where the goal is Individualized Permanency.

Goal	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance	Average Overall System Perform. Score
Adoption	2	2	100%	4.5
Guardianship	1	1	100%	4.0
Independent Living	2	2	100%	4.5
Individualized Permanency	4	3	75%	3.8
Remain Home	9	6	66.7%	3.9
Return Home	6	5	83.3%	4.3

RESULTS BY AGE OF TARGET CHILD

The comparison of the results for cases with older and younger children shows a difference on the Overall System Performance scores. Whereas 85.7% of the cases with a young child (0 to 12 years) had acceptable System Performance, 70% of the cases with a teenager were acceptable. A closer look at the data for young children reveals that 83.3% of the children ages 0 to 5 had acceptable System Performance while children from ages 6 to 12 scored 87.5%. Inasmuch as every case scored acceptably on Child Status, there was no difference in status outcomes based on age.

	# of cases in sample	# of cases acceptable	% Acceptable
System Performance			
Cases with target child 0-12 years old	14	12	85.7%
Cases with target child 13+ years old	10	7	70%
Child Status			
Cases with target child 0-12 years old	14	14	100%
Cases with target child 13+ years old	10	10	100%

RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Although concerns about caseload size came up frequently in focus groups in the Northern Region, large caseloads did not have a negative impact on the review results. Caseworkers with large caseloads actually performed better on System Performance than those with manageable caseloads (72.7% versus 84.6%). Last year's report identified a concern due to half the workers having a large caseload. This situation has not improved, as this year's data shows more than half of the workers have large caseloads. Based on the data gathered from the QCR reviews held this year in all regions, it appears that Northern Region has the largest caseloads. The average caseload for each region was: Western-13 cases, Eastern-12 cases, Southwest-13 cases, Salt Lake -13.4 cases, and Northern-15.4 cases.

Caseload Size	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
16 cases or less	11	8	72.7%
17 cases or more	13	11	84.6%

A look at the length of time the worker has been with the agency also shows a change. Last year there were no workers with less than one year of work experience. This year there were four workers reviewed who had less than a year of work experience. Interestingly, all four of the cases of the new workers passed System Performance while only 75% of the cases of experienced workers passed.

Length of Employment with the Division	# of cases in sample	# of cases acceptable	% Acceptable
System Performance			
# of workers with 1 year or less experience	4	4	100%
# of workers with 1+ years experience	20	15	75%

RESULTS BY OFFICES AND SUPERVISORS

The following table displays the overall case results by office and supervisor. All three cases from office A, both cases from office B, and the case from office D all had acceptable System Performance results (100%). Office B and office D passed all of their cases last year, too. Eleven of thirteen cases from office E passed System Performance (85%) this year. This is an increase from 46% of their cases passing last year.

On the other hand, only one of the three cases from office C passed System Performance last year (33%). The performance of this office rose just slightly this year, with only two of five cases passing (40%). Clearly the performance this office must improve dramatically if the region is to pass overall System Performance next year.

Office	Supervisor	Child Status Overall Score	System Performance Overall Score	System Performance by Office	System Performance by Supervisor
A	A	Acceptable	Acceptable	3 of 3 Acc. = 100%	A 3 of 3 Acc. = 100%
A	A	Acceptable	Acceptable		
A	A	Acceptable	Acceptable		
B	B	Acceptable	Acceptable	2 of 2 Acc. = 100%	B 2 of 2 Acc. = 100%
B	B	Acceptable	Acceptable		
C	C	Acceptable	Unacceptable	2 of 5 Acc. = 40%	C 0 of 2 Acc. = 0%
C	C	Acceptable	Unacceptable		D 2 of 3 Acc. = 67%
C	D	Acceptable	Acceptable		
C	D	Acceptable	Unacceptable		
C	D	Acceptable	Acceptable		
D	E	Acceptable	Acceptable	1 of 1 Acc. = 100%	E 1 of 1 Acc. = 100%
E	F	Acceptable	Acceptable	11 of 13 Acc. = 85%	F 1 of 3 Acc. = 37%
E	F	Acceptable	Unacceptable		G 1 of 1 Acc. = 100%
E	F	Acceptable	Unacceptable		H 2 of 2 Acc. = 100%
E	G	Acceptable	Acceptable		I 1 of 1 Acc. = 100%
E	H	Acceptable	Acceptable		J 3 of 3 Acc. = 100%
E	H	Acceptable	Acceptable		K 1 of 1 Acc. = 100%
E	I	Acceptable	Acceptable		L 2 of 2 Acc. = 100%
E	J	Acceptable	Acceptable		
E	J	Acceptable	Acceptable		
E	J	Acceptable	Acceptable		
E	K	Acceptable	Acceptable		
E	L	Acceptable	Acceptable		
E	L	Acceptable	Acceptable		

Summary of Interviews with Community Stakeholders and Focus Groups with DCFS Staff

Northern Region QCR FY2004

There were a number of focus groups and stakeholder interviews held during the week of the QCR reviews in the Northern Region. Focus groups were held with DCFS caseworkers, DCFS supervisors, regional administrators, and successful former clients of the Division. In addition, stakeholder interviews were held with a private provider of proctor homes, a shelter provider, and members of the Quality Improvement Committee.

Strengths:

- Teaming is working well and there is good support for teaming.
- Flexible funding is readily available and requests for funds are supported.
- There is good access to community services.
- Administration supports doing the right thing for the right reason.
- Partner agencies support teaming and want to be included in DCFS plans.
- DCFS uses available technology to support practice.
- Functional assessments are getting done.
- Case transfers from CPS to foster care are handled well.
- Service plans are more individualized.
- DCFS partners well with other agencies.
- DCFS staff accepts that Practice Model is the way they do business.

Barriers:

- High caseloads.
- Assistant Attorney Generals want reports well in advance of policy deadlines.
- Judges override team decisions.
- Judges order children into care although there is no abuse or neglect.
- Workers feel the legislature is “down on them.”
- Lack of agreement on how to consolidate reports and minimize paperwork.
- Turnover and high burnout rate among new workers.

Recommendations:

- Bring new workers on more quickly and give them caseloads sooner.
- Prioritize services and put them on a timeline for the parents.
- Re-establish region steering committees.
- Provide opportunities for supervisors to have input into policy making.
- Provide the region with leadership and direction on dealing with the media.
- Abolish Foster Care Citizen Review Boards.
- Treat foster parents better. Provide better training and closer oversight.
- Provide a way for successful former clients to help current clients.

Qualitative Case Review Exit Conference

May 2004

STRENGTHS:

- Strong working relationship with partners
- Less authoritarian approach
- Quick adaptations
- Broader definition of partners
- Quality foster homes
- Good support for foster parents
- Good transfer of case from CPS resulted in rapid kinship placement
- Use of timelines, attached to LTV
- Parents having greater voice in choosing caregiver
- New workers doing quality work
- Family having choices in services
- Supervisors involved in the case, hands on, helped in caseworker changes
- Creative interventions
- Easier access to flexible funds
- Attention to quick placement transitions
- Extended Family participation
- Worker keeping all partners informed and updated, continuity/consistency with the same worker, real attention to the importance of relationships
- Commitment of the office as a whole to support practice change

Strengths added by Region Staff:

- They are implementing the practice model in spite of high caseloads.
- Workers are committed and go above and beyond.
- They see consumers as partners, as evidenced by the parent focus group

PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- F.A. and LTV: it's not just a document, but a process. We need to move beyond, look at underlying needs and getting to specific steps.
- Be sure that schools are included as partners early on.
- Pay attention to preparing for Child and Family Team meetings. Use the teaming process earlier in the case.
- Be sure the team is broad enough, including all the important partners.
- Follow the pattern of the "Critical Path Schedule" used in the construction industry. This should be our plan.
- Be sure that we look at kinship sincerely and early on.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Attention to Teaming:

- Building – who is on the team, helping family identify team members (including school, informal supports)
- Preparation – open and regular communication
- Maintain the team process

Functional Assessment:

- Getting to underlying needs, moving from a social history to a process of analysis
- Include formal assessments
- F.A. needs to be used to develop the plan and drive service planning

Long-Term View:

- Use available tools and family/partners to develop a LTV
- Extend view beyond case closure to maintain safety and permanence

Other:

- Encourage / Empower staff to advocate for families and present alternatives to court ordered services.

Recommendations from Staff and Region:

- Prepare for team meetings. Get everyone there.
- Improve understanding of FA, and do more work in the region on how you use it.
- Use the health care team to greater advantage. They have access to funds workers may not know about.
- Team better with ongoing services. Move teaming forward. Share case responsibility with CPS.
- Get a “second set of eyes” on the cases early on.
- Find a way to utilize successful clients who have graduated to help current clients.
 - Do a family letter or video that could be shared with other families that describes problems and successes.
 - Create a family support group consisting of clients and former clients.